



Rhode Island Department of Health

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www.health.ri.gov

**Frequently Asked Questions About The College and University-based H1N1
Vaccination Program**

Date: December 3, 2009

To: College and university students

From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH

Re: Campus-based clinics

Question: Where and when will college and university students receive H1N1 influenza vaccinations?

Answer: The twelve colleges and universities in the state will hold clinics on their campuses for students through age 24 who are enrolled at those institutions. These clinics will take place on campuses, with the first scheduled to start the week of November 30. Vaccination clinics at all twelve of the schools are expected to be completed by December 18.

Q: How was the order of the college and university-based vaccination schedule determined?

A: The first phase of clinics will target the nine colleges and universities with residence halls and on-campus housing. Students who live in close, congregate settings are considered to be at higher risk for spreading influenza viruses. These clinics will take place on campuses, with the first scheduled to start the week of November 30 and the rest continuing through December 18. Phase two will focus on schools whose student population is entirely commuter-based. These clinics will be held the week of December 14. Each college and university is designing their own clinic and clinic schedule.

Q: Why aren't students older than 24 being vaccinated at the campus clinics?

A: To date, the highest number of cases of H1N1 flu have been confirmed among people 5 through 24 years old. Unlike seasonal flu, so far, H1N1 flu appears to infect younger people at a higher rate than older people, who may have some existing immunity from previous infections and vaccinations.

Q: Can young adults who are not enrolled in one of the 12 colleges be vaccinated at these campus-based clinics?

A: No. Students may only receive the H1N1 influenza vaccine at the college or university in which they are currently enrolled. Adults through age 24 who are not enrolled in college or who attend out-of-state institutions will have an opportunity to be vaccinated at designated sites at a later date. More information for this population will be forthcoming.

Q: Is vaccination against H1N1 voluntary?

A: Yes. While receiving the H1N1 vaccine is voluntary, HEALTH encourages all young adults through 24 years of age to be vaccinated at these clinics.

Q: Is the H1N1 vaccine safe?

A: Yes. The H1N1 vaccine is just as safe as the seasonal flu vaccine, which millions of people safely receive every year. This vaccine is made using the same processes and facilities that are used to make the currently licensed seasonal flu vaccines.

Q: Will consent forms be required for young adults receiving vaccinations at campus-based clinics?

A: Yes. Everyone receiving the vaccine will be required to return a consent form. Anyone younger than 18 will need to have a consent form signed by a parent or guardian. All consent forms must be returned to the college or university upon completion.

Q: How will students obtain consent forms and details about campus-based clinics?

A: Institutions will notify students regarding consent and vaccination details. Consent forms are also available to download from the HEALTH website (www.health.ri.gov).

Q: On the consent form, I answered “yes” to one of the questions about allergies, previous flu vaccinations and existing medical conditions. Can I be vaccinated at the campus-based clinic?

A: If you answered “yes” to any of the questions, about allergies, previous flu vaccinations and existing medical conditions you cannot receive the nasal-spray vaccine that will be given at the campus-based clinic. You may be eligible to receive the injectable vaccine in another setting. Talk to your doctor about this.

Q: Can individuals through age 24 receive the H1N1 vaccination from their doctors instead of at the campus-based clinics?

A: If students do not get vaccinated at their schools during these clinics, they will have to wait until the vaccine becomes available through public clinics or adult healthcare providers, probably sometime in January.

Q: What type of vaccine will be used at the campus-based clinics?

A: All healthy students will receive the nasal-spray vaccine at the campus clinics. Anyone with an egg allergy or underlying health condition such as asthma may not be eligible to receive Flumist and should contact their college or university health services office. A small amount of injectable vaccine will be available to the colleges and universities for those who are not able to receive the intranasal vaccine.

Q: Why is HEALTH beginning vaccination of this age group when all of Rhode Island’s younger school-aged children haven’t been vaccinated yet?

A: A different presentation of the vaccine, the nasal-spray, will be used for the college/university clinics. No vaccine will be taken away from the K-12 school-based clinics in order to begin vaccinating college/university students.

Q: If someone has already had the flu, do they need the H1N1 vaccine?

A: Yes. Many of the people who had influenza-like illnesses this year (fever plus a cough or fever plus a sore throat) did not have H1N1 but may have had other viruses. Viruses are also unpredictable and may change. Therefore, HEALTH recommends that everyone get the vaccine, even if they had or thought they had H1N1 already. Getting the vaccine is safe and will not cause any adverse reactions.

Q: Can someone receive the H1N1 vaccine if they are sick with a fever?

A: Yes. However, clinic staff will not vaccinate anyone with a fever of greater than 100.4° Fahrenheit or 38° Celcius.

Q: Where can I find up-to-date information about the college and university-based vaccination program?

A: For additional information and questions, visit www.health.ri.gov or contact HEALTH's H1N1 Information Line at (401) 222-8022.